

Florence-Firestone Vision Plan

Summary Notes

Community Workshop #3 – Summary of Florence-Firestone Vision Plan
March 28, 2009, Washington Park

On Saturday March 28, 2009, members of the Florence-Firestone community met for the third of three public community workshops to develop the Florence-Firestone Vision Plan. The purpose of this third and final workshop was to review and comment on the overall vision for the community and the components of the vision plan and then to prioritize a number of community actions that could be implemented over the coming years. Community Workshop #3 also included a community resource fair where Los Angeles County departments and other service providers set up tables and distributed information about their programs. Over 50 members of the public attended the workshop, many of whom were attending a Florence-Firestone Vision Plan workshop for the first time.

Presentation and Vision Plan Feedback

Matt Raimi, with Raimi + Associates, gave a presentation to the community on the work that had been completed on the project to date. The presentation included a discussion of the purpose of the Florence-Firestone Vision Plan, a summary of the key issues and opportunities facing the community and a recap of the community workshops #1 and #2, which occurred on January 10, 2009 and February 21, 2009, respectively. The presentation also included a summary of the proposed vision and potential actions for the Florence-Firestone community. The vision and proposed actions were divided into 8 categories; the 8 categories and the community's response to the vision are presented below.

- **Florence Mile and Florence Blue Line Station** – Overall the community agreed that the Florence Mile should play an important role in the community and that the area needs to be improved with new uses, streetscape improvements, façade improvements, and increased public safety. Several community members commented that Florence Mile is only the “heart of the community” for the northern and central parts of Florence-Firestone and that similar improvements should be made on Firestone Boulevard near the Firestone Blue Line station.
- **Physical Center of the Community** – Participants agreed with the desire to identify and develop an area that serves as the physical center of the community. This area is bounded by Florence Avenue, Nadeau Street, Compton Street and Graham Avenue and includes the heart of Florence Mile, Roosevelt Park, the Florence Blue Line station and the existing county services building and Sheriff's Youth Activity League facility at the corner of Nadeau St. and Compton Ave. The area identified and the proposed uses – including a civic center, new uses along the railroad right-of-way and improved

connections along Nadeau, Compton, Maie/Graham and Florence Avenues – would serve as the physical center of the community.

- **Neighborhoods and Housing** – Participants agreed that neighborhoods should be the center pieces of the community fabric and that the neighborhoods needed to be improved. There was general agreement that the County should look to downzone some of the R-2 and R-3 residential areas so that only single family homes are allowed in the future and that new higher density housing should be located along the corridors. The community also indicated that many neighborhoods needed improvements such as street trees, improved lighting, significantly more code enforcement and neighborhood associations and/or block captains.
- **Corridors** – Community members agreed that corridors should undergo significant visual improvements, including: streetscape, traffic safety, façade improvements and new buildings. They agreed that some corridors – Compton Ave., Hooper Ave. and Nadeau St. – should be rezoned to residential uses from industrial and commercial uses and that Central and Firestone should remain commercial. Comments were also made that Firestone near the transit station could serve a similar function as Florence Mile does for the northern part of the community and that pedestrian safety, especially near schools, is extremely important. Finally, a comment was made that Central Ave. and Gage Ave. and several other streets are on the border with other jurisdictions and this makes coordinated streetscape improvements more difficult.
- **Alameda Corridor and Industrial Uses** – There was overall agreement with the general direction that Alameda Corridor should remain as a job-producing area for Florence-Firestone residents and with the vision that the area should be marketed as the “Recycling District.” There were additional comments that the county should try to locate a Costco or similar big-box use as a way of providing jobs for teens or young adults.
- **Jobs and Economic Development** – There was agreement that the County should pursue a range of strategies to increase the number of jobs for the community as well as to attract new businesses.
- **Parks and Open Space** – The community expressed a desire to increase the number and amount of parks and open spaces and all agreed with the ideas presented in the vision plan. One comment was made that the Edison utility right-of-way (which runs east-west along 91st street from Alameda St. to Compton Ave. and then along Success Ave. from 98th St. to 92nd St.) should be converted into a park as is occurring in South Gate and that a new skate park should be built in the community.
- **Transportation** – Overall, the community agreed that a range of transportation improvements are needed in the community. Specific suggestions made by the community included increased lighting on streets, improved bus stops and finding a range of strategies to improve safety around schools.

Community members also provided additional comments and ideas that could be included in the Vision Plan. These are listed below.

- A question was raised about the impact that all of the proposed improvements would have on the property taxes of residents. There was a concern that increased taxes would force existing residents out of the neighborhood.
- A comment was made that more of the community needs to be involved and that more outreach should have happened for the workshop. This need to organize the community should be included as an action in the Vision Plan.
- A suggestion was made that there needs to be significantly more code enforcement in the community and that code enforcement staff should have additional training on community relations.
- A teenager in attendance suggested that there needs to be more jobs for teenagers. Most employers do not hire until youth turn 18 but many teens want to start working at 14 or 15. One suggestion was made that the County could hire teenagers to help clean trash, mitigate code enforcement violations, and do other community improvement activities.
- Additional policing is needed in main pedestrian area. If bike paths are built, additional policing will be needed in these areas.
- More money is needed to maintain the existing tree network.
- Partnerships are needed with local churches to build housing and construct new uses that are desired by the community.
- A question was raised about how to address noxious, polluting uses next to schools.
- A suggestion was made to create a task force in the community to address school safety.
- More trash cans are needed at bus stops and throughout the community.

Action Voting Exercise

Each of the 8 categories of the vision also included a list of actions that could be undertaken to improve the quality of life in the community. Following the presentation, each member of the community was given 15 sticky dots to vote on the actions that they felt were the most important. A summary of the top actions that received votes is presented below as well as the top votes within each category. The total votes for each action is attached to this summary.

Top Actions Overall

1. Improve bus stops (Transportation) – 34 votes
2. Improve the appearance of the buildings along the railroad with landscaping and signage (Center of the Community) – 27 votes
3. Create job training programs and expand vocational training opportunities, including collaboration and partnerships between local schools, community colleges and businesses (Jobs and Economic Development) – 22 votes
4. Create and support neighborhood watch groups (Neighborhoods and Housing) – 21 votes
5. Expand homeownership programs (Neighborhoods and Housing) – 19 votes

6. Conduct regular street and sidewalk cleaning (Florence Mile and Florence Blue Line Station) – 18 votes
7. Install “welcome signs” and entryway treatments at major entryways (Corridors) – 16 votes
8. Improve the pedestrian bridge over the Blue Line near the Florence Station (Center of the Community) – 15 votes
9. Increase public safety in parks (Parks and Open Space) – 15 votes
10. Develop streetscape improvement program (Corridors) – 14 votes
11. Complete the Florence Mile streetscape improvement program (Florence Mile and Florence Blue Line Station) – 14 votes
12. Increase code enforcement (Corridors) – 14 votes
13. Develop streetscape improvement program for Alameda Corridor (Alameda Corridor and Industrial Areas) – 14 votes

Top 3 Actions By Category

Florence Mile and Florence Blue Line Station (58 total votes)

1. Conduct regular street and sidewalk cleaning – 18 votes
2. Complete the streetscape improvement program – 14 votes
3. Expand the library – 10 votes

Center of the Community (84 total votes)

14. Improve the appearance of the buildings along the railroad with landscaping and signage – 27 votes
15. Improve the pedestrian bridge over the Blue Line near the Florence Station – 15 votes
16. Create a “County Hall” for increased responsiveness to local needs – 13 votes

Neighborhoods and Housing (95 total votes)

1. Create and support neighborhood watch groups – 21 votes
2. Expand homeownership programs – 19 votes
3. Implement alley improvement program – 13 votes

Corridors (48 total votes)

1. Install “welcome signs” and entryway treatments at major entryways – 16 votes
2. Increase code enforcement – 14 votes
3. Build affordable and/or senior housing on Holmes Ave., Compton Ave., and Nadeau St. – 10 votes

Alameda Corridor and Industrial Areas (44 total votes)

1. Develop streetscape improvement program – 14 votes
2. Create an identity for the area to encourage certain users and provide incentives for development – 10 votes
3. Redevelop underutilized and non-conforming parcels with new uses – 9 votes

Jobs and Economic Development (40 total votes)

1. Create job training programs and expand vocational training opportunities, including collaboration and partnerships between local schools, community colleges and businesses – 22 votes
2. Create an industrial business development and attraction strategy – 5 votes
3. Create a retail demand and attraction plan – 5 votes

Parks and Open Space (55 total votes)

1. Increase public safety in parks – 15 votes
2. Use schools as playground – 11 votes
3. Develop community gardens – 11 votes

Transportation (75 total votes)

1. Improve bus stops – 34 votes
2. Improve pedestrian safety and access to Blue Line stations – 11 votes
3. Improve pedestrian safety around schools – 10 votes

Next Steps

Based on the information provided by the public and this workshop and at the previous two workshops, the consultant team and the County will develop the Florence-Firestone Vision Plan. This plan will serve as the basis for a more detailed “Community Plan” which is expected to be prepared by the County’s Department of Regional Planning (dependent on ability to secure needed funding). Additionally, the information in this plan can be used by the community to help prioritize actions for improving the quality of life in the future. The Vision Plan is expected to be completed in late April or early May of 2009.

If you would like any additional information, please contact Steven Jareb, at the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning at 213-974-6454 or sjareb@planning.lacounty.gov.